

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07
TRSE-00 AID-05 /074 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/PAB:PWLANDE/MW

APPROVED BY P - MR. HABIB

NEA - MR. DUBS

S/S:MR. REDDY

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O R 262348Z APR 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

S E C R E T STATE 094109

LONDON FOR THE ATTENTION OF JOSEPH S. NYE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, US

SUBJECT: PAKISTAN POLITICAL SITUATION

1. SUMMARY: AMBASSADOR YAQUB KHAN CALLED ON UNDER SECRETARY HABIB ON APRIL 25 FOR A BROAD RANGING REVIEW OF PAKISTAN'S POLITICAL SITUATION. HABIB EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT A DIALOGUE WITH THE OPPOSITION WOULD TAKE PLACE BUT STRESSED THAT THE U.S. WOULD NOT INVOLVE ITSELF IN DOMESTIC PAKISTANI DECISION MAKING. END SUMMARY

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2. YAQUB KHAN NOTED THAT THE ARMY HAD BEEN BROUGHT IN "TO AID CIVIL POWER" IN A NUMBER OF CITIES. SUCH ACTION WAS "DISTASTEFUL" FOR BOTH THE ARMY AND CIVIL AUTHORITIES AND WOULD HOPEFULLY BE TEMPORARY. HE STRESSED THE GOP'S DESIRE FOR A DIALOGUE WITH THE OPPOSITION "ON ANY TERMS THE OPPOSITION SUGGESTS." ONE SUCH POSSIBILITY WOULD BE NEW

PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS UNDER MILITARY OR JUDICIAL SUPERVISION TO BE FOLLOWED BY NEW NATIONAL ELECTIONS IF THE OPPOSITION ATTAINS A MAJORITY IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS. SO FAR THE OPPOSITION HAD BEEN UNWILLING TO ENTER INTO ANY FORM OF DIALOGUE BUT HAD MERELY SOUGHT BHUTTO'S OUSTER. LEADING OPPOSITION FIGURES CURRENTLY UNDER DETENTION HAD NOW BEEN ASSEMBLED NEAR ISLAMABAD WITH THE HOPE THAT TALKS COULD BE INITIATED.

3. YAQUB KHAN STATED THAT THERE WAS A "BODY OF OPINION" IN PAKISTAN THAT A FOREIGN POWER, OFTEN IDENTIFIED AS THE UNITED STATES, WAS SUPPORTING THE OPPOSITION, FINANCIALLY OR OTHERWISE. THIS SUBJECT HAD ALREADY BEEN DISCUSSED WITH AMBASSADOR BYROADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER. THE USG DECISION TO SUSPEND SHIPMENTS OF TEAR GAS HAD BEEN USED AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE U.S. TAKING SIDES EVEN THOUGH HE PERSONALLY WAS SURE THAT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE.

4. HABIB NOTED THAT AMBASSADOR BYROADE IN HIS MEETING WITH BHUTTO HAD ALREADY REPLIED TO THE CHARGE OF U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE OPPOSITION AND THE PRIME MINISTER SEEMED TO ACCEPT THIS DENIAL. HE HAD THOUGHT THAT THE AMBASSADOR'S COMMENTS HAD ALREADY PUT THIS MATTER TO REST. HOWEVER, HE WANTED YAQUB KHAN -- AND THE PRIME MINISTER -- TO KNOW THAT U.S.G. HAS BEEN EXTREMELY CAREFUL TO AVOID EVEN THE APPEARANCE OF INVOLVEMENT IN PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS, BOTH DURING THE RECENT ELECTIONS AND DURING THE RECENT DISTURBANCES. YAQUB KHAN SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO RECEIVE THESE REASSURANCES.

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5. HABIB NOTED THAT THE TEAR GAS EXPORT SUSPENSION WAS BASED ON PRECEDENT, THAT WE HAD TAKEN SIMILAR ACTION IN OTHER CASES OF CIVIL DISTURBANCES.

6. HABIB NOTED THAT IT WAS NOT IN USG'S INTEREST TO HAVE UPHEAVALS IN PAKISTAN. WE HOPED THAT A DOMESTIC DIALOGUE WOULD TAKE PLACE, BUT WE WOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN PAKISTAN'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND WILL NOT "SECOND GUESS" PAKISTAN. WE ARE SADDENED BY THE SIGHT OF A FRIENDLY COUNTRY TEARING ITSELF APART AND CAN ONLY HOPE THAT THE PAKISTANI PEOPLE WOULD RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. THE USG WISHED TO MAINTAIN ITS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOP.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: IN VIEW OF THE APPARENT GOP CONCERN ABOUT THE USG ATTITUDE TOWARDS PAKISTAN'S CURRENT PROBLEMS, YOU SHOULD SEEK AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY OUR POSITION AT THE HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL.

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